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City of Salisbury and Rowan County to Kick-off Salisbury-Rowan READS! 2010 on Wednesday, July 14

Five-Week Program to Offer FREE Book Giveaways and Promote Reading to Children

Salisbury, NC _July 7, 2010 – The City of Salisbury and Rowan County will partner for the second straight year to provide free book giveaways to children during the Salisbury-Rowan READS! 2010 summer reading initiative. The five-week program kicks-off on Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at 5 pm at the Rowan Public Library, 201 West Fisher Street in Salisbury. The purpose of the program is to promote reading to children, encourage children to obtain a free library card, and to provide a free book to all children in attendance each week.

Due to the overwhelming success of the 2009 summer reading program, local municipal leaders unanimously agreed to join forces and implement the five-week program again for a second straight summer. The first City-County reading project was the result of a joint meeting held between City Council members and County Commissioners. During the cooperative session, education was identified as a partnership priority based upon a February 2009 report prepared by Dr. Suzanne Morse. In her report, Morse, who serves as president of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, studied and evaluated the local community and identified a strong need for community support for local education. Renowned author of *Smart Communities*, Morse shared that children who are not reading at the appropriate level by third grade, hold strong potential to become drop-outs by the time they reach high school. Dr. Morse also offered statistical data that demonstrated the relative connection between student drop-outs and a subsequent rise in criminal activity and youth violence. Morse challenged the local community to become more involved by supporting the Rowan-Salisbury School System and fostering support for students in the form of reading and math skills. Through unanimous agreement, municipal leaders agreed to work collectively to provide improvements throughout the community. In addition to the City's previously established positive youth initiatives, the Salisbury City Council has adopted supplemental goals over the last two years that provide direct support for the creation of reading and math skill attainment opportunities.

Municipalities participating in the Salisbury-Rowan READS! 2010 Program will proclaim the July 14 – August 11 observance publicly during their respective municipal meetings. This year's program will again be funded by the City of Salisbury and Rowan County with additional support provided respectively by partnering municipalities. Salisbury-Rowan READS! 2010 will take place on Wednesday evenings from 5 pm to 7 pm and

will travel to a different location throughout Rowan County, each week. The five-week schedule by location is as follows:

July 14	Rowan Public Library (RPL)	201 West Fisher Street, Salisbury
July 21	East Branch RPL	110 Broad Street, Rockwell
July 28	Spencer Library Park	Fourth Street, Spencer
August 4	Frank T. Tadlock South Branch RPL	920 Kimball Road, China Grove
August 11	Cleveland Elementary School	107 School Street, Cleveland

For faster check-in during registration, children already in possession of library cards should bring their cards to the event. Each week, events will offer free refreshments and giveaways, story time by local government and school leaders, emergency service vehicle displays, games for children, and exciting door prizes. New this year, an exciting storytelling session will be offered by storyteller Obakunle Akinlana, a local favorite. A complete Nintendo Wii System will be given away each week as a grand prize.

Mayor Susan Kluttz, speaking on behalf of the Salisbury City Council shares, "The City of Salisbury is proud to once again partner with Rowan County to sponsor this exciting program as together we promote the importance of reading to children. A love for reading is truly one of the greatest gifts a child can ever receive. The more young children are read to, the greater their desire and interest will become to master the art of reading. As adults, when we nurture a child's love for reading, we share proper grammar and phrasing and further enhance the development of spoken language skills. Reading to a child also strengthens the emotional bond between a parent and a child and allows children to learn more about the world in which we live."

Kluttz offers that support from local municipal leaders remains outstanding. "The enthusiasm and support from our local government leaders has been amazing. The towns of China Grove, Cleveland, East Spencer, Faith, Granite Quarry, Landis, Rockwell, and Spencer have pledged their continued support on behalf of our children. Each municipality is planning its own unique weekly program this year and we are excited about the addition of local flavor to each of these events. Together, we hope to assist in raising youth self-esteem, strengthening family bonds, and promoting school achievement through the encouragement of reading. I am truly proud of our local government officials and their relentless dedication to all children throughout Rowan County. We are committed to working together to ensure the future success of all of our children." The Mayor also acknowledges the exceptional support that has been received from Dr. Judy Grissom, Superintendent of the Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Dr. Sarah Hensley, Director of Elementary Education, and Jeff Hall and Suzanne White of the Rowan Public Library.

Rowan County Commission Chairman Carl Ford notes, "Rowan County is pleased to join forces with the City of Salisbury to assist in promoting the significance of reading. When children are read to by an adult, young vocabularies expand and language skills are able to develop more fully. Children learn correct pronunciation, proper grammar and the ability to express one's self verbally." Chairman Ford echoes the sentiments of Mayor Kluttz in offering his appreciation to all municipalities that have pledged their support for the reading program. "I am truly proud of our local government officials and their dedication to the children throughout Rowan County. I encourage citizens to attend one or more of these exciting events that have been planned to positively impact the

reading capabilities of children and to further enhance high school achievement and future success.”

For questions regarding the 2010 Salisbury Rowan READS! Program, citizens may contact Karen Wilkinson at the City of Salisbury Public Information Office at 704-638-2113. Rowan County government is made up of nineteen departments that are committed to providing a wealth of services to county residents and businesses. For more information regarding Rowan County local government, please visit www.rowancountync.gov on the World Wide Web. The City of Salisbury is an equal opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and more than 400 full-time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit us online at www.salisburync.gov. To receive updates regarding local initiatives, meetings, programs, and events, please join the City of Salisbury’s Facebook users group at www.salisburync.gov/facebook or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CitySalisburyNC>.

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